

AMERICAN CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS

How-To Guide 2024

Defining and Tackling Climate Health Issues: Physicians for Social Responsibility- LA (PSR-LA)

ecoAmerica's How to Guide is a resource for US leaders and their stakeholders to address climate challenges wherever they are living and working.

OVERVIEW

Physicians for Social Responsibility-LA (PSR-LA)'s guide outlines how to collectively define the climate-related problem, and identify the health issues involved. The step-wise guide recommends crafting a plan, seeking funding, implementing the program, and constantly refining your offering based on feedback.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 1. Plan:** Work collectively to do the research, define the problem, and identify the health issues involved. Together, define your goal, and create a collective strategy and work plan.
- 2. Fund:** Identify potential funders and partner with a foundation that can help to fundraise. Ask for what you need for all coalition partners, and make collective funding decisions to ensure all groups can build capacity. In our case, taking funders and donors on tours of oil drilling sites was extremely powerful. Consider doing something similar for your project, something that immerses your funders in your work. Most importantly, sometimes you have to just do the work until the funding comes, even when it's hard.
- 3. Develop:** Build deep and enduring relationships based on trust and respect for frontline leadership. Collectively develop member agreements, principles of collaboration, decision-making processes and divisions of labor. For long fights you need to build long-term capacity with your partners by establishing trust and agreements about collective negotiations. It must be clear that no one member can decide for the group or pull off from the group and negotiate a separate agreement. It is also beneficial to agree to not undercut community demand. Co-power the impacted community through education and advocacy grounded in the community's experience.
- 4. Launch:** Launch when you have reached a milestone We typically do not do official public launches of our coalitions or advocacy campaigns. We launch by doing the work: researching, planning, strategizing, and power mapping. The media attention came as we moved the policy through the city council at key times during this 10-year campaign. However, in the case of the Leap LA coalition, the launch was done in collaboration with the city council and mayor's office which helped bring funders to the table.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 5. Manage:** We have, and recommend, strong coalition leadership structures. Establish a culture of abundance and accountability, agree to non-compete, and establish a co-leadership structure for the coalitions. Make plans and revise them constantly. Work hard to get dedicated communications funding.
- 6.** Use your positional power to speak truth to power!